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has extracted from the heterogeneous mass of the old laws and customs of France, the element of general jurisprudence, and followed out the ingrained principles of the Roman Law, with a power of generalization, and clearness of expression, to which there is nothing comparable in the whole annals of legal achievements." The treatise on Contracts is an important portion of those works, which elicited such a warm and merited eulogium from the English lawyer.

Though this treatise can possess, in America, none of the authority and weight of statute laws, and their judicial expositions, it richly furnishes those scientific and equitable considerations, which lawyers and judges, however able in native resources of intellect, or however much relieved from responsibility by inflexible precedents, wish ultimately to repose upon in forming conclusions, which, from their practical effect upon the interests and happiness of their fellow-men, must needs be justified as well at the bar of conscience as of public opinion. Besides, it is clothed with the authority of common law for those portions of America which were formerly under the jurisdiction of France, as Louisiana and Lower Canada.

This, in common with all translations, is marred by some inherent defects, impossible to be removed, because founded in the very elements of thought. The frequent occurrence of Latin words and phrases, concentrating in their signification whole laws and principles, more or less unknown to the foreign reader, abates much of the point and force of the general reasoning. It must be owned, too, that some doctrines are laboriously discussed, which have become, by a change of circumstances, and the diffusion of knowledge, scarcely worthy of even a formal statement.

16. — *Poems*. By GEORGE LUNT. New York: Gould & Newman. 1839. 12mo. pp. 160.

THE largest poem in this volume is of the didactic or philosophic kind, written in the good old couplet of Pope. It is called "Life," and is an attempt to unfold and illustrate the truth, that Christianity is necessary to the full development of the nature of man. We are inclined to the opinion, that didactic poetry is the most difficult achievement of genius, when wrought up to its highest perfection. To carry on a train of philosophical meditations, or to support a succession of reasonings and inferences, with all the restraints

of metre and rhyme, and with all the ornaments of poetical illustration, must task the understanding, the imagination, and the power of expression, to their utmost. And in truth we find, as might be expected, in most attempts of this kind, little more than a series of unconnected truisms, sometimes expressed with point and terseness, but most frequently, on a close analysis, assuming the form of a *caput mortuum*.

If we say, that Mr. Lunt has not produced a didactic poem of the first class, we question neither his taste nor his genius. In the first place, the subject he has chosen is one of the greatest magnitude and importance. Treated thoroughly, it would require years of toil, almost endless knowledge, and the highest philosophical as well as poetical powers. It is the great subject of speculation in modern times. Apart from its claims as a system of religious truth, imparted to man by Divine Revelation, Christianity, in its political, social, and intellectual relations, is the one great, stupendous phenomenon in modern history.

Mr. Lunt has given us a very pleasing poem, touching upon the leading topics of this high argument, and written generally in a polished and melodious style of versification. There is one fault, very common in the heroic couplet, which Mr. Lunt occasionally falls into; that is, the use of unnecessary epithets, to complete the rhythm, and to balance the hemistichs. It is curious to observe, how frequently in this poem (and almost every other written in the same measure), the first half of the line contains an adjective, necessary perhaps both to the sense and rhythm, and, after the cæsural pause, comes another see-sawing with it, wholly superfluous, except for the melody. Thus.

“Where *burning* words instinct with *living* fire.”

Besides, is it not tautological to call “*burning* words instinct with *fire*?”

Again,

“The same *dark* passions fire his *owing* breast.”

“Through the *dry* sands of Afric’s *burning* waste.”

“Or *torrid* sunbeams scorch the *blazing* line,” — mere surplusage.

“No *generous* glow his *rugged* bosom warms.”

“Where the *rude* soldier leads his *hard-eyed* band.”

“Crawls *basely* down to his *ignoble* grave.”

“Nor *soft* refinement soothes his *rugged* heart.”

“How man’s *dark* spirit sank in *gloomy* night.”

"Waits the *glad* coming of day's *burning* eye."

"A *kindlier* fire his *frozen* bosom warms."

"His *selfish* bosom feels a *genial* glow."

In truth, there are many lines in this poem, which might be cut down to eight syllables, with no detriment to the meaning and with much advantage to the style. We notice, too, several repetitions of favorite words, such as "immortal," "glowing," "burning," &c. which have an unpleasant effect, and weaken the impression of the imagery. Occasionally we find a finical expression like, "jewelled sky." It might do to compare jewels to stars, but to compare stars to jewels is to compare an object of transcendent beauty in nature, to another beautiful indeed, but too familiar, — to tradesmen's shops and ladies' fingers. However, it must be confessed, that the best poets frequently commit this fault, — we mean the error of taste, — in comparing noble objects to things in their nature less noble.

Having found fault freely with this poem, we give the following extract.

"Would grander visions charm gay fancy's eye?
Behold the gorgeous East come sweeping by,
As when our common parents o'er it trod
Glowing with beauty from the hand of God!
Leave the lone savage to the deep recess
Of his unseen, primeval wilderness;
See man, a loftier being, grasp the sway
Which weaker mortals dare not disobey,
Stretch his broad empire to the rising sun,
Deem nothing his, while aught is to be won,
Yet, ere his hand secures the dazzling prize,
A change comes o'er it, and the pageant flies; —
And like the pictures on the magic glass,
Which one by one, in gay procession pass,
Yet, ere the steadfast eye can fix them there,
Fade quite away, and melt in empty air, —
So the vain empires men eternal deem
Rise up and vanish, like a shifting dream! — p. 30.

Many of the shorter poems are written with grace, feeling, and great truth to nature. Take, for instance, the following;

"TO A WARM WIND IN WINTER.

"Low, sweet wind, whose melody
Floats along the rippled sea,
Why, to ride the curling foam,
Did'st thou leave thy pleasant home?
For thy motion soft and slow,
And thy voice so sweet and low,

Tell of milder climes than this,
 Far beyond the blue abyss.
 Dost thou come from Araby,
 Where eternal summers be?
 Or, where over ocean isles
 Everlasting verdure smiles?
 Sporting under spicy trees,
 Singing where the roses blow,
 Could'st thou leave them, wandering breeze,
 For the land of cold and snow?

Dost thou bring from Eastern bowers
 Tidings of the birds and flowers?
 For the birds away have flown, —
 And the flowers all shrunk and gone; —
 Go, and tell them how we long
 For the roses and the song; —
 Now, sweet wind, I warn thee go,
 Here is only cold and snow!" — pp. 53, 54.

We have been struck, in reading this volume, with Mr. Lunt's command of poetical expression and imagery. Sometimes his pictures are indistinct, from being overwrought; but generally they show a nicely observant eye, and a happy facility in the execution.

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17. — *Caii Crispi Sallustii de Catilinæ Conjuratone Belloque Jugurthino Historiæ*. *Sallust's Histories of the Conspiracy of Catiline and the Jugurthine War. From the Text of Gerlach. With English Notes.* Edited by H. R. CLEVELAND, A. M. Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown. 1838. 8vo. pp. 198.

THIS is a very neat and attractive edition of the great Latin Historian. It is printed in a clear type, on good paper, and with a careful supervision of the press. The text selected by the editor is an excellent one. Mr. Cleveland has given, in a short introduction, a well-considered and well-worded criticism on the different classes of historical compositions, and on the writings of Sallust.

The peculiarities of Sallust's style make him a difficult author for schoolboys to understand. He is condensed, epigrammatic, and elliptical. Now a condensed style is for strong minds; an epigram is not comprehended readily by those who are unaccustomed to the society of wits; and elliptical sentences require a reflective power, and a concentrated and continued attention, which schoolboys are not apt to have. Sallust abounds, moreover, in philosophical reflec-